

The Square and Compasses.

A newsletter for the Grand Lodge of South Africa. No. 55 August 2016



Most Worshipful Brother Geoff Edwards OSM.

Avoid Living a Life Regretted!

I was recently reminded about a letter that Apple founder Steve Jobs was purported to have written on his death bed. Jobs was a man who had been adopted at a very young age and who displayed an abnormal flair for electronics. He got together with Stephen Wozniak and, after Jobs had dropped out of University, the pair of them started the amazing Apple Computers journey. While there is much debate about the authenticity of this letter, it does serve well as a basis for my article. Jobs' life had its ups and downs. He was, however, a major contributor to world technological progress and his death from cancer at 56 years was a real setback.

"I have reached the pinnacle of success in business. In the eyes of others, my life has been the symbol of success. However, apart from my work, I have little joy. Finally, my wealth and fame is simply a fact to which I am accustomed. At this time, lying on the hospital bed and remembering all my life, I realise that all the accolades and riches of which I was once so proud, have become insignificant with my imminent death. In the dark, when I look at green lights of the artificial respiration equipment and feel the buzz of their mechanical sounds, I can feel the breath of my approaching death looming over me.

Only now do I understand that once you accumulate enough money for the rest of your life, you have to pursue objectives that are not related to fame and wealth. It should be something more important. For example, stories of love, art, dreams of my childhood. No, stop pursuing wealth alone, it can only make a person into a twisted being, just like me.

God has made us one way and we can feel the love in the heart of each of us, not illusions built by fame or money. I cannot take them with me. I can only

take the memories that were strengthened by love. This is the true wealth that will follow and accompany me, will give me strength and light to go ahead.

Love can travel thousands of miles and so life has no limits. Move to where you want to go. Strive to reach the goals you want to achieve. Everything is in your heart and in your hands.

What is the world's most expensive bed? The hospital bed. You, if you have money, can hire someone to drive your car, but you cannot hire someone to take over your illness that is killing you. Material things lost can be found. But the one thing you can never find when you lose it, is life. Whatever stage of life we are at right now, at the end we will have to face the day when the curtain falls.

Treasure love for your family, love for your spouse, love for your friends. Treat yourself well and always cherish others."

While Steve Jobs was not, to my knowledge, a Freemason, so much of what is referred to in his letter is in line with our own Masonic teaching. He, for example, firmly believed in the immortality of the soul.

In his letter Jobs draws our attention to his sudden realisation that, at the end of his life's journey, he had all too often focused on those things which he now found to have been of less importance. Perhaps, looking at it in another way, he had simply not focused enough on those really important issues. There are so many things that he would have done differently.

I am always intrigued when somebody declares that, if they were to have their life again, they wouldn't change a thing. I would. I'd change so many things. Not the really important ones such as my wonderful wife or the family we are so proud of, or my decision to become a Freemason. I'd certainly, however, change some of the decisions that I have made which have negatively impacted on those I love or my thoughtless deeds or words which have hurt people near and dear to me. I'd change them all but, of course, I can't!

To me, the saddest thing about Jobs letter, is that he appears to have only found the time to evaluate his life when he was on his death-bed - and it was then too late to do very much about it. In my view we should be continually assessing our progress, examining our actions and endeavouring to shape and smooth the rough ashlar which symbolise our lives.

Each and every one of us has been blessed with just one life. It is up to us to make the most of it, to look forward and strive to grow ever more perfect, and to leave a legacy which, at the end of our life's journey, we can proudly present to our Maker.

**MW Bro Geoff Edwards OSM
Grand Master**



Installing Officer RW Bro Alf Brönner (5L), Master Wor Bro Andrew Coetzee and Brethren from GLSA and Sister Constitutions

Lodge Makalani's Installation

Each year, at the beginning of July, we celebrate one of the truly unique events on the GLSA calendar - the Lodge Makalani installation. This Grootfontein (Namibia) Lodge is the only GLSA Lodge outside the borders of South Africa and this uniqueness is not the only factor that makes it so popular. The Brethren and their wives always make visitors particularly welcome and there are Brethren from around South Africa who having been once, return again and again!

This year saw Wor Bro Andrew Coetzee being reinstalled as Worshipful Master. The installation was performed by RW Bro Alf Brönner, the PGM of Central Division and, from all accounts, the working was a most successful one.

We are on the same page as New York!

We recently received a communication from the Grand Lodge of New York in which they clearly outline their policy with regard to any form of discrimination. As it mirrors our own position on the subject, we thought that we'd share it with you.

"While we respect the sovereignty of all other Grand Lodges, the Grand Lodge of New York believes that Freemasonry is a universal fraternity comprised of men from every corner of the world; from every religion and ethnicity; from every creed and colour; from every shape, size and sexual orientation. Masons have learned long ago, that what truly matters is the content of the heart and the quality of the soul. Our members practice the tenants of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, and our requirements for those seeking membership is a belief in a Supreme Being, the immortality of the soul, being a man free born, well recommended and of lawful age.

It is further declared that any Grand Lodge who digresses or impedes upon these universally accepted qualifications for candidacy into this honoured institution, may risk the good standing and recognition currently enjoyed with this Grand Lodge."

de Goede Verwachting's Tulbagh Toy Drop

On 22nd July Lodge De Goede Verwachting visited the picturesque town of Tulbagh, 90 minutes from Cape Town, to thank Carol and Norman Collins for their support of our activities. Norman is our very accomplished Spring Ball photographer, whilst Carol provides us with various attractive prizes; including Readers Restaurant meal vouchers, Wittedrift Art Manor House weekends and some wine tastings.



Carol with the Brethren, their partners and the children

When asked what we could do to help the activities that she supported, Carol suggested that the Lodge might donate various items to local special needs schools and support centres. The Lodge reacted by collecting soft toys, books, a television, DVD and Video players and a wide selection of documentaries for the children to use and / or view. They were duly presented to Carol over the weekend.

Freemasonry is truly international.

"Freemasonry extends over the whole globe and every Brother forms part of it".

Whilst not quite accurate to our ritual, the quotation above does encapsulate the universality of the Order. We regularly receive international visitors to our Lodge workings and recently had a Brother from South America attend the First Degree working of Lodge Golden City at Orange Grove.

Bro Paolo Valdes, is a Master Mason from Renovacion Lodge No 31 of the Grand Lodge of Chile.



The Golden City Brethren with Bro Valdes on the right.

Bro Valdes wrote to the Lodge after his visit:

"Back home in Dubai I still feel my heart full of emotions and I have nothing more to say but thank you again. This was a really Masonic experience for me, where your fraternity and the reception I had at Golden City will stay in my memories for ever.

Please receive a fraternal hug with my wishes of health and happiness and I hope this life will permit me to meet you, my fraternal brother RW Bro Jacques Markantonis, and all members of Golden City again.

Freemasonry is banned in the Emirates and it must have been a real pleasure for Bro Valdes to, once again, meet and greet on the square.

The Annual Meeting of Northern Division.

The AGM took place on Saturday 23rd July at the Central East Rand Masonic Temple Complex in Boksburg. Well over 100 Brethren attended this very well run meeting, during the course of which the Provincial Grand Master, RW Bro Alan van der Vyver invested a new Assistant Provincial Grand Master.

Before doing so, he disinvested and thanked Wor Bro Rex Ingle for the hard work and loyal service that he had given to the Division over the past 5 years. Wor Bro Ingle has been appointed as a Grand Assistant Master of Ceremonies and will be invested as such at the Grand Lodge AGM in Cape Town.



RW Bro Alan van der Vyver thanks Wor Bro Rex Ingle

RW Bro van der Vyver then obligated and invested Wor Bro Ini Akpan as an Assistant Provincial Grand Master. Wor Bro Akpan has distinguished himself both as the Master of his Lodge and as the Division's Master of Ceremonies.



RW Bro Alan van der Vyver congratulates Wor Bro Ini Akpan

As has become RW Bro van der Vyver's custom, he handed out 2 exceptional performance awards. The first was for the outstanding Presiding Master of the Year and this went to Wor Bro Marius Mostert for his sterling efforts in rebuilding Lodge MW Pretorius. Wor Bro Mostert unselfishly took the chair of a Sister Lodge to assist it to recover from a period of decline.

RW Bro Nuno Calvet was then announced as the "Northern Division Mason of the Year" for his work in the revival of Lodge Star of the West. This Lodge had also experienced difficulties over the past few years as the traditional source of its new Members had steadily declined with mine closures being an ongoing challenge. Nuno, however, in his own style of never accepting defeat, took his Brethren into the community and the Lodge has initiated 6 high quality candidates in a year.



The Grand Master, MW Bro Geoff Edwards, OSM attended the meeting and expressed his excitement over the positive progress in the Northern Division. It shows that growth is a reality when you put your mind to it.

Motivated Brethren make things happen - and success is infectious.

The PGM could not resist telling "just one" fishing story before the AGM closed. In the evening a number



of the Brethren much enjoyed the "Burns Nicht"; which was held at Pretoria Country Club and hosted by the Brethren of Lodge Koh-I-Nor.

The Birth of the Grand Lodge of South Africa

It is sometimes amusing to watch our different Divisions each trying to show how they are the closest to our Sister Constitutions. The reality is that we all have very strong relationships - and we always have had! It was because of this that the GLSA was formed.

It all came about in the early 1960s. We were, at the time, part of the Grand Lodge of the Netherlands who, in the aftermath of World War II, sought to regularise the relationships within a group of European Grand Lodges. This group was popularly known as the Luxemburg Convention and MW Bro Davidson, the Grand Master of the Netherlands, was their spokesman. A problem arose when France's interpretations of the basic Masonic landmarks did not, in the United Grand Lodge of England's opinion, give proper recognition to the 3 great lights or pay suitable reverence to a Supreme Being or the Volume of Sacred Law.

The whole situation was complicated by some most unfortunate comments made by Davidson and his apparent willingness to recognise France. It quickly became apparent that, should Netherlands give formal recognition to France, there was a very real chance of the United Grand Lodge of England suspending their recognition of the Grand Lodge of the Netherlands. As far as the Netherlandic Lodges in South Africa were concerned, this would have been disastrous.

In South Africa the four Constitutions worked extremely closely and many of the Freemasons active at the time were members of more than a single Constitution. Any suspension of the Netherlands would automatically include their South African Lodges - and this simply wasn't an acceptable scenario.

In an exchange of letters between Davidson and RW Bro Graham Botha, local Deputy Grand Master of the Netherlands, Davidson acknowledged the very close relationships which existed between the Constitutions in South Africa and suggested that it might be appropriate for the Netherlandic Lodges in South Africa to form their own independent Grand Lodge.

Botha and his two Provincial Grand Masters, Chris de Wet and Eddie Conradie, made their way to Europe where they met with all the relevant players and got the support of the home Grand Lodges to pursue the establishment of the Grand Lodge of South Africa.

While the initiative inevitably met with some resistance from a number of South African based Lodges, the principle was finally carried and work began on preparing for the consecration. With certain defined conditions in place, the support of the Sister Constitutions was secured and they then played a leading role in launching the new Grand Lodge. As an example, RW Bro Thomas Cranstoun-Day, the long serving Cape Town based District Grand Master of the English Constitution, played a significant role in the drafting of the new Grand Lodge's Constitution.

The Grand Lodge of South Africa was formally consecrated on 22nd April 1961. Lt-Col Graham Botha was the 1st Grand Master, Christiaan de Wet the Deputy and Eddie Conradie the Assistant.

MW Bro Geoff Edwards OSM

Almoner's Corner

It seems to be that time of the year when the Almoner is kept very busy. Sadly we have to report that Wor Bro Tienie Vermaak (Star of the North) passed to the Grand Lodge above during the month and Bro Manny de Freitas (de Goede Hoop) lost his father. Our deepest sympathy and condolences are extended to their families and loved ones.

Wor Brethren Ross McIver (de Goede Trouw), Jacques Maritz (de Goede Verwachting), Rodney Marquis (Marina), Bushy McKelvey (Dromedaris), Hans Schober (Germania), Braam van Zyl (Oranje), Eric Henkel (de Goede Verwachting) and both Louis Wolsink and his wife Marina (Royal Protea) have all been in hospital this month. We hope that you will each enjoy a speedy relief from your suffering. Please know that your Brethren care about you and that you are foremost in our hearts and prayers.

The recent cold snaps have also taken their toll on many of our Brethren who are sporting colds and flu. Cold Lodge rooms do not, of course, help so please Brethren wrap up warmly and stay well.

Grand Almoner

Brethren, the Grand Almoner can only be as effective as the information he is fed. Please, if anything is known about a Brother in distress, just phone RW Bro Neville Klein OSM at 071 4148869 or send him an email to:

kleinneville@gmail.com



Registration Number: 2002 / 031211 / 23

This is your last chance to reserve your place

on the Masonic Tour to Israel

"In the Footsteps of Freemasonry"

Join the Grand Master on this wonderful tour during
September 2016 - Cost is R30,934 pp sharing

Please contact Henda Heyneke on +27 (0) 11 764 2783,
Cell: +27 (0) 83 256 6682 or on heyneketours@telkomsa.net
for more information on this tour and other arrangements.



Dudu Garcia, far right, delivering warm clothes to the children of the Orphanage supported by Lodge Friendship